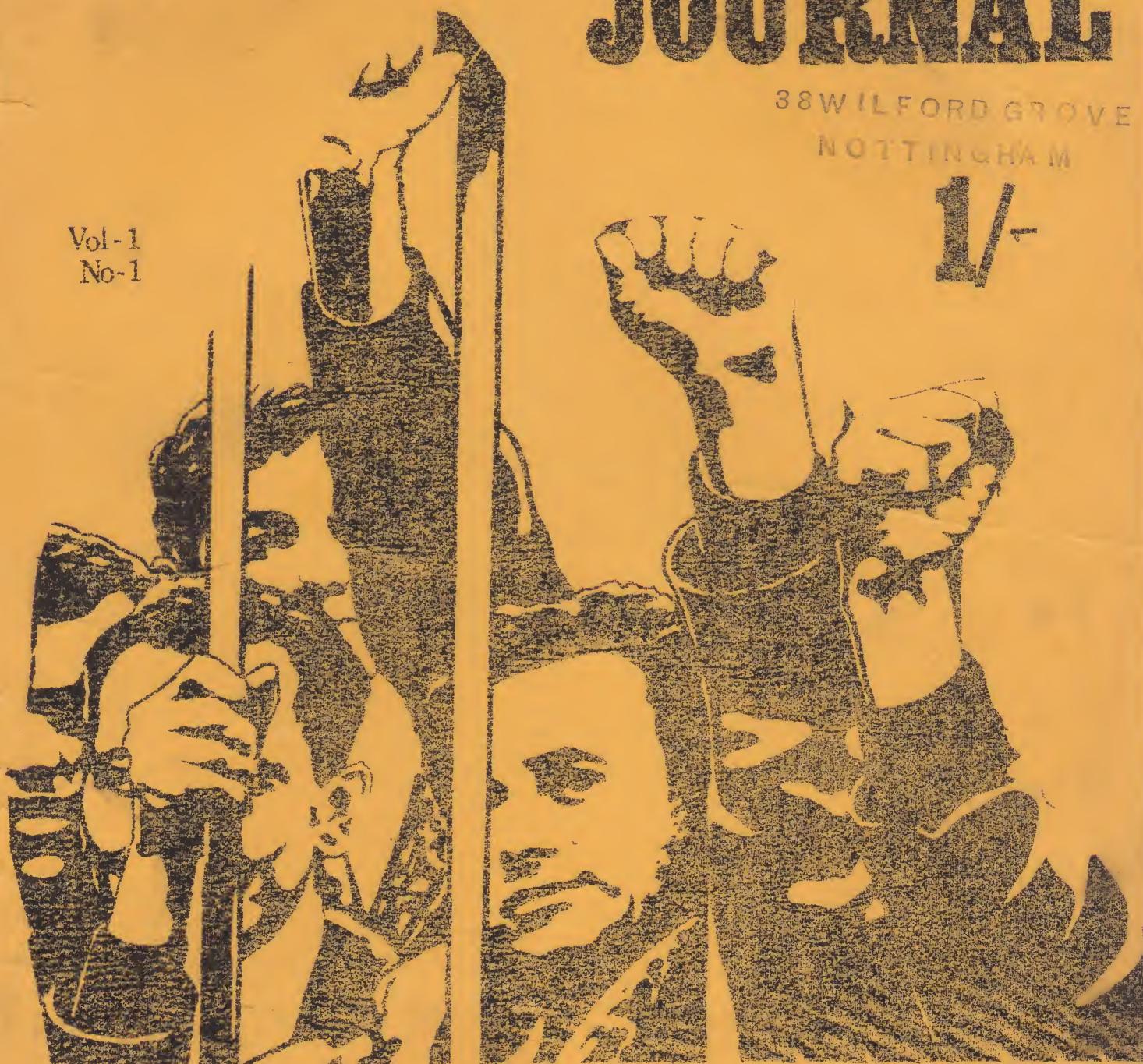


MARXIST YOUTH JOURNAL

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A MARXIST YOUTH JOURNAL

This is the first issue of a new journal produced by members and sympathisers of the International Marxist Group who are working amongst student and non-student youth. We define the tasks of the journal in relation to the needs of the revolutionary vanguard which is emerging amongst youth.

Internationally, the youth vanguard is grappling with fundamental strategic problems which we summarise in three points:

1. Transforming its political practice from spontaneous revolt against Imperialism, the capitalist educational system and bourgeois culture, into a conscious revolutionary practice fusing with the existing workers' vanguard in a unified, global struggle against capitalism.
2. Transforming its ideology from a spontaneous expression of revolt — anti-authoritarianism, "Third Worldism", workerism, - into a coherent revolutionary theory linking the concrete conditions of existence and unrest of the various sectors of youth to the global contradictions of capitalism.
3. Building an organisational cadre capable of leading and centralising the struggles of youth and of helping to construct a revolutionary workers' party.

It is clear that the youth vanguard in Britain has not yet achieved the mass base which has enabled it, internationally to intervene as an autonomous political force within bourgeois society. Does this mean that we are fated to pass through a phase of spontaneous student upsurge before posing the questions mentioned above? It was the expectation of such a development which we thought would express itself through the loose political and organisational framework of R.S.S.F. that led us to concentrate on the problems directly confronting militants in the University sector, through the journal "Student International". We continue to believe that such a tactic was correct in the twelve months after May. On at least two occasions - October 27th and the L.S.E. solidarity demonstration in the spring - the objective conditions were present for a mass upsurge within the universities. But the forces of the vanguard were too weak, politically, theoretically and organisationally to provide the subjective drive towards such a development.

The subsequent dispersal and fragmentation of the student vanguard expressed presently in R.S.S.F. and I.S. combined with many signs of rising industrial militancy within the working class calls for a new tactic on the part of the vanguard. The pattern of development of the movement is unlikely to be a unilinear repetition of the course of the youth movement on the continent. This does not imply rejection of the possibility of a mass movement within the universities and colleges; quite the reverse. But it does mean that we seize hold of the backwardness of the British student movement and turn it to our advantage. We have the opportunity of leaping over a whole process of spontaneous

growth and experimentation, if we try to take as our starting point the highest level of theory and practice which the vanguard has achieved internationally.

This journal will, therefore, concentrate on developing the following themes:

1. Help us to learn from the experiences of the movement in other advanced capitalist countries.
2. Develop a theory of the contradictions of British capitalism as they affect youth and a programme for the youth movements in this country.
3. Start a discussion on the problems of building a revolutionary youth organisation in Britain.
4. Help militants acquire a grasp of the fundamentals of revolutionary theory.

This definition of our tasks is based on a number of premises: the most important one is that we are part of a movement which, in its fundamental origins and goals, is not new. Its origins lie within capitalism itself and its goals - the destruction of capitalism through proletarian revolution - are precisely those for which the working class was fighting 100 years ago. Consequently, the revolutionary theory which the working class movement has forged over the last century is our theory and those who think they are fighting a new war which requires new theoretical weapons are leading themselves, and too often others, to repeat the defeats which it was the role of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky to transcend. It has not been a simple matter, not a job that can be done by some clever intellectuals, to understand the nature of the world we live in and to develop a correct strategy for transforming it. It was out of the daily defeats of generations of workers that Marx developed his revolutionary method. It was on the basis of many decades of fruitless struggles by Russian revolutionaries, and of the cataclysmic tragedy of World War I that Leninism emerged; and it was out of no less staggering setbacks for the working masses of the world that the Left Opposition and Fourth International forged the theory which enable us to combat the revisionism of the Soviet bureaucracy today.

For those reasons we consider our basic practical task is building a vanguard organisation within the youth whose political practice is integrated within the theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism; this is why we link this journal to the programme of revolutionary Marxism.

The elements of such a programme are summed up in Ernest Mandel's speech on "Trotskyism Today" which is reprinted here: permanent revolution in the colonial world; the revolutionary road to socialism in the advanced capitalist countries; political revolution for socialist democracy and the overthrow of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe; proletarian internationalism and the Fourth International.

From a Student Grouplet to a Vanguard Organization: the Organizational Growth and Transformation of the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire.

(This text was produced by comrades of the Ligue Communiste for the militants of the Fourth International, but we feel it contains important lessons for the youth vanguard in Britain: we should, in particular study their experience of the Entry Tactic, the form and content of their work in anti-imperialist struggles, and the direction they gave to the French student movement; but the central theme and the main value of this text lies in the conscious and relentless fight to build a vanguard organization amongst youth as part of the wider struggle for a revolutionary party)

INTRODUCTION

1. The revolutionary marxist current which we represent, was before May 1968 one of several currents of the vanguard claiming marxist traditions. If the Maoists are more divided, more sectarian and politically weaker than ever (whether hyper-Stalinists or "spontaneists"), if the "national independent trotskyist" currents "Lutte ouvrière" and "Lambertists" (a split from the Fourth International in 1953) survive or even develop, one should understand from the start, without any danger of self-satisfaction, that with regard to the political place occupied by a revolutionary pole facing the bourgeoisie and reformism, we hold without any doubt the first place.

The militants of the Communist League (LC) work essentially in the following sectors of intervention: Workers, Student youth (University, High schools, Technical schools), Teachers, and Medical personnel (medecin, hospital personnel, etc). They grew mainly from the following sources:
-from the ex-JCR (founded in March 1968);
-from the ex-PCI (Internationalist Communist Party, section of the Fourth International before May 1968);
-from May 1968: recruitment to the "Rouge" circles;
-from the revolutionary Krivine campaign in May 1969: recruitment to the Communist League.

"Youth work" and the organizational "growth and transformation":

2. Our current crossed a first qualitative threshold after 1960 when our comrades of the French section (then quite small) started a first "youth work" inside the UEC

(Union des Etudiants Communistes-Communist Student Union, the official student organisation of the CP). This work was so successful in its main forms-ideological factional fight; critique of the reformism of the French CP, the "peaceful road to Socialism", "peaceful coexistence", etc-that it led to our expulsion from the UEC after the presidential elections of 1965 (the CP supported the "left" bourgeois candidate Mitterrand). We then founded the JCR.

The origin of the JCR explains that during a long time, it was not only a "youth" organisation, -without global programme-but also an organisation with its main, if not only, implantation in the student milieu.

Today in 1969 France, revolutionary marxism, "Trotskyism", is no longer limited to a group of young dynamic revolutionary students surrounding the main militants of bolshevik tradition: it has crossed the field of the university to gain a place in the sun of the political arena, a place which has been and can be widened:

- a) "youth" work means no longer only work in the student milieu;
- b) the strategy of building the revolutionary mass party implanted in the working class implies a priority given to the work with workers, adopted in April 1969 by the founding congress of the Communist League, taking into account the perspectives, tasks and actual possibilities of the League;
- c) the youth work therefore is only part of our work, a part whose place, objectives, importance and function in the "dialectic of the sectors of intervention" has to be defined.

3. Bibliography:

There can be no question of giving a history of our section nor of describing the problems of this history in the framework of this internal bulletin. That is the reason why we think it useful to recall to the comrades of the International who are interested, publications which will help them in the field of our subject:

(the American comrades, before publishing this report, should check these French titles against what is and will be published in English language)

"Mai 68, Iere phase de la Révolution Socialiste française" (special issue of "Quatrième Internationale");

-"Avant-Garde jeunesse" (Organ of the ex-JCR-14 issues from spring 68 to June 68);

- "La Quatrième Internationale" (monthly paper of the ex-PCI, 30 issues until June 68);
- "Rouge"
- "Mai 68, une répétition générale", by D. Bensaid and H. Weber, édition Maspero, Paris 1968;
- Cahiers Rouges, documents de formation communiste, Construire le Parti, construire l'Internationale"
- no 6/7 "Théorie et Système d'organisation"
- no 8/9 "De l'internationalisme à l'Internationale", édition Maspero, Paris 1969;
- Pierre Frank, "La Quatrième Internationale" éditions Maspero, Paris 1969;
- Textes de référence politique (Ier congrès national de la JCR);
- JCR textes et documents (Samona et Savelli, Italy).

THE FIRST QUALITATIVE CHANGE: FROM A STALINIST ORGANIZATION TO AN AUTONOMOUS MARXIST CURRENT (FROM THE UEC TO THE JCR).

In 1954 the Fourth International organized concrete support for the Algerian National Liberation Front (FNL). Its French militants applied revolutionary defeatism, organized propaganda for support of the FNL, multiplied the acts of "sabotage" qualified as such by the bourgeoisie who went as far as accusing us of having produced several thousand mortars for the FNL...

This clandestine work was done together with an effort of political clarification. This was indispensable, given the ideological confusion and the moral crisis created through the war. Both together drew a small number of young militants who stated work in the UEC to revolutionary marxism.

At that time the UEC was still fairly dynamic ("radical" demonstrations against the Algerian war) and large (4000 students), led by "liberal" CPers (pro-Italians who have become "Castroites" since their expulsion) and consequently tolerated a certain internal democracy. The trotskyist militants, not wanting to cut themselves off from the most politicized layers of the student milieu, entered the UEC and started to build a revolutionary tendency.

The first perspective was to make themselves known in practice as mass organizers capable of proposing initiatives corresponding to the political necessity of the moment and at a level of consciousness of the politicized students. This led to the founding of the FUA (Anti-fascist University Front).

In opposition to the inertia of the French CP and its asthmatic "peace movement", in which a number of students refused to enter we launched anti-fascist committees at the University Sorbonne, which organized, 5 days after the creation of the FUA, through a system of illegal appointments, a "direct" operation against a fascist meeting in Paris. The FUA developed in spite of the CP, the UEC, the PSU (left Socialist Party), the UNEF, etc...

The left faction inside the UEC had to regroup the UEC militants favourable to the FUA and to draw the majority of the UEC toward to FUA.

The FUA gives our "youth work" doubtless a positive balance-sheet: through its audience (6000 adherents in Paris), and its action (the Latin Quarter was cleaned of fascists during the period of highest OAS activities) The FUA had become a political force to the left of the CP, a mass movement led by vanguard militants for whom this was an exceptional cadre school.

The experience of the FUA (condemned by the CP) made possible the radicalization of several dozens of UEC militants. The left faction enlarged the political field plowed by the FUA in opening the fight on big political problems inside the UEC: the trotskyist critique of stalinism and of "peaceful coexistence". It was mainly on the basis of a political text about the latter point that the left faction got the majority of the UEC in the Sorbonne and transformed this sector into a revolutionary stronghold, which slowly conquered the leadership of a national revolutionary tendency, the mother of the future JCR.

2. The JCR (Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires).

Besides the fact that after our expulsion from the UEC we had only the choice of being destroyed or of creating something new, the creation of an autonomous youth organization was justified by the uneven rhythm of development of the vanguard inside the youth and the adult working class. A text of the Central Committee of the PCI (1966) showed that the politicization which took place in part of the youth did not pass any longer through the channel of youth movements affiliated to the large workers parties. The problem of knowing whether the JCR should be the revolutionary organization of the youth of inside the youth became particularly complex when a discussion arose about a

draft "appeal to the youth". The trotskyists gave to the JCR the "goal of regrouping all the youth which turn towards revolutionary marxism. The regroupment should operate on a programme including a global understanding of stalinism and of the conditions which led to the creation of the JCR, support to the colonial revolution and a clear understanding that it is not possible to build a revolutionary party in France without having gained the most militant wing of the workers movement, to-day still under the control of the CP and its mass organizations..." (Intern Bulletin of the PCI, June 66).

The problem of recruitment was posed by the student origins of the JCR itself. The conditions of recruitment were easier for young workers than for high school and university students, because "the wish to join the JCR represents a much more important point for a young worker than his confusion of lack of understanding of some of our positions. The implantation among the young workers should represent one of the fundamental axis of the JCR. Besides its own activities, the JCR must find or develop mass organizations (UNEF, Peace Committed, Youth Houses, Films clubs, etc.). Though the JCR is not a trotskyist organisation, it is nevertheless true that its existence is linked to the political, theoretical and militant support which our party and the International are the only ones able to give to it, which has already been the case during the faction fights inside the JC (Young Communists) and the UEC..." (ibidem).

3. The JCR and the anti-imperialist struggles:

Like the rest of the new revolutionary generation, the JCR's god fathers were the Cuban revolution and the struggle of the Vietnamese people. Very soon the double problem was posed of demonstrating in a spectacular way that the JCR had been launched, and of regrouping on an international basis the enormous militant potential which needed a concrete occasion to manifest itself and which we offered to it in October '66 in Liege, Belgium. On October 15th, 4000 youths demonstrated there against American imperialism. Belgian (of the JGS), French (of the JCR), Danish, Germans, Italians as well as representative from the YSA of the USA and the YSF of Canada met for the first time. Also in

Liege, the militants of the Revoltes group and their British brethren of "Keep Left" cut themselves off from everybody through their profound and total incomprehension of the anti-imperialist nature of the "united front", and through their ignorant and boasting sectarianism.

The militants who could not go to Liege started a widespread campaign of explanation and solidarity about and with the demonstration. The outcome of this demonstration was the "Brussels Conference" which united some 12 anti-imperialist youth organizations of Western Europe. We will return shortly to this "Brussels Conference", since it marked certainly a step in our organizational development and our international practice. The political context of the creation of that "Conference" was mainly based on the analysis of the radicalization of a growing part of the youth in the imperialist countries, a politicization which expressed itself through a) their active participation in strikes, demonstrations, etc; b) the creation of autonomous currents claiming to be genuinely socialist, after splits with the traditional adult organizations "definitely gone over to the side of the bourgeois order".

These autonomous youth organizations as such have limits which soften only progressively. So the ex-JCR had (see "Textes de référence politique") "as its task, to become the revolutionary youth in France... it organizes the vanguard of the youth but it cannot pretend to become the revolutionary party simply by the growing older of its cadres or by recruitment of adults". In other words, its programme and its possibilities of intervention were quite strictly defined (in a positive as well as in a negative way). But there is a positive counterpart to this reservation: the elsewhere made analysis of the more favourable reception of "ideological" themes in the youth than in the working class, especially those concerning internationalism. From the necessity ("theoretical gains", political references) and from the possibility (new objective conditions and receptive milieu) to practise militant internationalism, there developed a confluence of anti-imperialist activity which the "Brussels Conference" had to try to coordinate. In its (only) information bulletin published about the meeting of the "Conference" on March 11 and 12, 1967, the "Conference" defined its goal as the following: "...to coordinate politically and organizationally

support for the Vietnamese revolution and the struggle against NATO...this coordination gives the basis and pushes towards the constitution of unity of socialist and militant forces".

The political resolution then published precised the anti-imperialist conception of the "Conference". This conception should be remembered and was defended by us inside the National Vietnam Committee(CVN):

- the international strategic importance the Vietnamese people against American imperialism;
- the correctness of the slogan "FNL will win!", and the necessity to popularise the four points of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five points of the FNL;
- the propaganda for "a united front of support and action including the workers movement and the socialist countries without exception";
- the struggle against NATO.

One sees quite clearly till where this "platform" goes, and one distinguishes also clearly to what it explicitly does not refer to- since it was supposed to be adopted by all those 12 organizations with different origins and nature: the growing over of the national liberation struggle into a socialist revolution, the permanent revolution. The "coordination committee" and the "Conference" were not, as some comrades wished it to be, a centralized organization on a European level of political youth movements. We had in fact not realized the -in reality unachievable-

unity on a global programmatic basis of the different organizations meeting at this Conference. As we shall see the perspective to realise such a unity can only become smaller and smaller.

Berlin, February 17 and 18, 1968: everybody knows that, starting from the efficient framework of the "Conference" and the broadening of new anti-imperialist forces, the militants of the International played a determining role in the preparation of the international congress and mass demon- stration against the war in Vietnam in Feb 1968 in Berlin. Berlin is still quite clear in the mind of militants and even of those who came into the political life only recently. Therefore it is not necessary to speak extensively about its importance. The "radical" character of the Berlin manifestation reflects a development which has four aspects: a) the central and mainly proclaimed objective is definitely not any

longer "peace in Vietnam", but clearly the solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution.

b) Anti-imperialism widens and generalizes itself: to the solidarity with Vietnam is added that with the Latin-American revolution, the Cuban revolution, the guerillas; the support to Che Guevara is not a simple whim. His appeal "let us create two, three, many Vietnams" finds an enormous audience and symbolises in a concentrated way the development of mass internationalism. c) Imperialism unmasks itself openly as "the final stage of capitalism". The anti-imperialist struggle takes very noticeable anti-capitalist dimensions in Europe and in the United States . d) Finally the organization and the form of demonstrations are changed. No longer peaceful walks, but organized running and formed demonstrations with red flags and large banners at their head, referring to the great revolutionary Marxists and the present fighters, communicating their force to less or non-organized elements. Berlin did not only popularise a new style of demo but constituted a considerable step forward in the mass work which our comrades and ourselves could achieve through the French CVN, the German SDS, the English Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, etc...

Doubtless at that moment a threshold was passed from the point of view of our audience of our organizational capacity, a threshold all the more essential since May 68 approached, and our "internal" progress had not been less successful.

- The Implantation in the Youth.

At the opening of the university year 67/68 the center of gravity of the JCR intervention had to be transferred from the activity of support to the Vietnamese revolution towards organizing the struggles of the university and high school students against the government policies of professional education.

The new orientation was based on the political analysis presented on September 30 and 31, 1967 before the National Committee of the JCR.

The general offensive launched by the bourgeoisie against the working class (stabification plan, emergency powers, tec.) had

a clear degradation of the working and living conditions of the wages earning masses. When the government started to attack fundamental conquests of the workers movement (with its decrees on Social Security) the management accelerated the speed-up of work, blocked the wages and "compre-

sed employment". A profound discontent reigned in the working class whose combativity grew. The workers' leaders from the CP and the Social Democracy tried to take away the explosive character of this combativity. Prisoner of their electoral alliance, they hoped to conquer power at the next elections and therefore were without reservation opposed to the "thoughtless actions", considered as causing them to lose votes. More than ever the trade union strategy found itself subordinated to electoral perspectives of left parties. The purpose was to maintain and to canalize the discontent of the workers in order to capitalize from it in form of votes at the next elections. In the socio-political context of the new University year 1967/68 this attitude was in fact identical with sabotage of the mass movement. But the discontent of the workers was such that a growing distortion between the aspirations of the masses and the trade union instructions was to be expected. This distortion could lead to important bypassings of the trade union apparatuses. In fact the situation was ready for a general bypassing. It was sufficient that a large metal factory should launch a wild-cat strike in order for the movement to spread like wild fire.

On the other hand, the new university and high school year 1967/68 was marked by the generalized application of the reform of the educational system. This was followed by a profound disorganization inside the faculties. It became possible to mobilize the students against the government policies of professional education and employment and to bring about a link with the workers movement, in its struggle against the social policies of the government. It became necessary to give to the student struggles the hardest possible forms. For, in a certain way, they could play an exemplary rôle (widely underestimated, including by us...). The student circles, which were generally not interested in the UNEF (National Union of French Students) in 1966/67, the year of paralysis of militancy and of widest internal dissensions of the student union, now entered with force into the Study Groups (basic units of the UNEF) and organized the struggle against the selection measures of forced orientation of studies, and of extreme specialisation, introduced by the Fouchet Plan,

In the high schools, the JCR circles made an important contribution towards a reconver-

sion of the action committees of the CVN into high school action committees (CAL-Comites d'action Lyceens). These committees which, from December 1967 on, were active in some thirty high schools, mobilized the high school students against the senseless and maniacal discipline which the administration imposed. They denounced the political function of that discipline, in the framework of a general application of the Fouchet reform of the educational system. The CAL were rapidly able to mobilize several hundreds of high school students in violent demonstrations. The Condorcet case which the yellow press made a big hue and cry about, conferred to them an enormous prestige, and opened the doors of the teachers's and vocational training schools for them (Romain Carpentier, CAL leader and JCR militant having been expelled from the high school Condorcet, several hundred high school students demonstrated twice before this high school, and became engaged in violent confrontations with the police). Parallel to this development the neighbourhood circles of the JCR grew rapidly and started agitation inside the factories. Their activity combined direct intervention (e.g. the regular publication of a factory paper) with the attempt to build a tendency inside the trade unions. It was in that period (December 1967) that the JCR witnessed a first important influx of young workers.

In February 1968 the international demonstration in Berlin for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution took place. The JCR sent a delegation of 300 militants, mostly from the Paris region, to participate in that demonstration. This international gathering played a very important role in the political evolution of the JCR. In Berlin, the JCR first met the modern student movement which would appear a few months later in the Nanterre campus, a university near Paris. The experience of the Berlin SDS animated by Rudi Dutschke, the experience of the student militants of Rome, Milan, Turin, opened new perspectives to the organization. Starting with these experiences, a new appreciation of the rôle of the student movement in the class struggle could be elaborated. Up to that moment, the JCR had thought that the spark which would put the social powder box on fire, notwithstanding the conservative apparatuses, would necessarily come from a pilot-factory in large-scale industry. Now slowly the

idea took form that this spark could very well come from the student movement. From Berlin, the JCR militants also imported a new style of demonstrations, a synthesis of demonstration techniques from all over Europe. This new style was for the first time applied in France as soon as the JCR delegation returned home, on February 21, 1968, on the occasion of the traditional anti-imperialist demonstration, this time organized in the Latin Quarter by the CMN and the UNEF.*

II. AROUND M.Y 1968

The detonator role of the university and high school student movement.

A lot has been written about this subject which cannot be treated here as such. One cannot but recall briefly the important and probably main part of the JCR in the constitution and the political bringing together, or one could even say, in the leadership, of the two main detonating factors: the March 22 movement of the University of Nanterre and the high school action committees (CAL).

Our political leadership, uncontested by the high school students and animating together with Cohn-Bendit the March 22 movement also actively participated, together with that of the PSU (Left Socialist Party) in the political guidance of the third detonating factor: the student movement, was mainly composed of Action Committees born in the fire of action and, lacking nothing better, provisionally assembled around the name of the UNEF (without stressing, it is understood, the virtually unique role of our "service d'ordre" (defence squad) in the large demonstrations of May 6, 8, 9 and 24, and on the barricades...).

Let us give the meeting in the large hall of the Mutualité, organized on May 9, 1968 by the JCR, the importance which it merits. Prepared for months around the prophetic theme: "The youth from revolt to revolution", it marked a real turning point in the consciousness, the effort of the organisation and therefore in the capacity of the "movement" to intervene. Though Rudi Dutschke was absent, the meeting was highly internationalist (Belgians, Dutch, Italians, Spaniards, Germans took part together with French).

5000 people could listen to comrade Mandel giving his analysis, well-known since then, of student revolt in the advanced capitalist countries, an analysis based on an original

appreciation of the place occupied by intellectual labour in the production process.

Our comrades Ben Said and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the two founders of the March 22 movement launched a political discussion about the nature and the possibilities of the mass movement. Their interventions were followed by those of representatives of all imaginable grouplets and political currents. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this meeting of May 9 was one of the sources from which the revolutionary "movement" of 1968 was nurtured before it mounted to the assault. Was it a lucky chance which transformed this meeting, originally foreseen by the JCR for its "routine" propaganda (one is tempted to write), into a massive preparation for the impending battle? Twenty hours later the barricades started to be built.

If the student mass movement in May 1968 could play this famous role of "tactical vanguard", of "provisional substitute for the vanguard party", it is also because the revolutionary militants-and we in the first place-had prepared the field. If it could break with the social-democratic and Stalinist tradition of the drawing room opposition, which fights on the same field as the so-called class enemy, if it could reject the integration into the system, avoid reformism and legalism, apply its own rules of the game, it is quite certainly at least in part because we had known during the weeks and months which had preceded the events and prepared the revolutionary crisis, how to find the objectives and the forms of struggle which were adequate to the largest possible mobilization. In launching and leading the struggles, we had been able to give "living lessons of political marxism".

--The "Cercles Rouges".

May 1968 did not only enlarge the number of militants. The "promotion of May" had also changed the nature of the organization whose audience if not solid penetration in the decisive sectors was certainly multiplied, but which, in a sense, given the political youth of a large number of its new militants, certainly tempered through revolutionary action but often still politically a little unsure of themselves, found itself more fragile than the nucleus of cadres which was formed at the beginning of the JCR in the school of ideological anti-Stalinism.

The old members of the PCI and the JCR continued on page

Dialectics and Thinking. By Ron Thompson (Oxford Univ.)

Introduction

The thought processes of the human mind are not arbitrary but conform to definite laws of motion. A study of these processes should, therefore, be scientific. Just as all sciences study specific kinds of movement in their relationships with other types of material motion, so too does the science of logic investigate the nature of thought processes in order to discover their general laws of notion and interconnections.

The science of logic has gone through an historical development in which there have been two main stages, expressed today in the form of two specific systems of logic: formal logic and dialectical logic. Formal logic, which was the synthesis and culmination of classical Greek philosophy, was founded as a formal discipline by Aristotle. As a logical system it reigned supreme for more than two thousand years and is still taught as 'official' logic in bourgeois universities.

Although the embryo of dialectics can also be found in classical Greece, it developed into a systematic science of logic only with Hegel, the outstanding thinker of the German bourgeois school of idealist philosophy. And Hegel did not complete the revolution in thought, for his dialectic remained idealist: he viewed the development of nature and society as a mere reflection of the development of ideas—"Spirit....is the cause of the world." Thus, social progress, natural evolution—all real processes—were reduced to the mystical development of the 'Absolute Idea'. Hegel erred on the basic philosophical question of the relation of thinking and being and provoked a materialist revolt led by the 19th century German philosopher, Feuerbach. But Feuerbach rejected not only Hegel's idealism but the dialectical method as well, producing a materialist philosophy akin to the mechanistic materialism of the previous two centuries. Significant progress beyond Hegel required a materialist criticism which at the same time inherited the dialectical method. This was the task of Marx and Engels.

By establishing the correct relation between ideas and things—which Hegel had reversed—and by salvaging the dialectic, they founded the science of dialectical materialism. In Marx's words: "the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing before, and placed on its feet again." Whereas Hegel saw the development of nature and society as a reflection of the development of ideas, Marxists see the reverse—ideas and consciousness in the last analysis reflecting material reality and subordinate to it.

Thus, the logic of Marxism is essentially a dialectical logic, since, if the dialectic pervades the changes in material reality, then the thought process must also be dialectical if it is to comprehend that reality.

Formal Logic

As Hegel once pointed out, a thing can be understood only when examined in its connections with its opposite. Just as a workers' state cannot be fully comprehended without a knowledge of the nature of capitalism, and an understanding of Trotskyism is dependent on an investigation of its opposite, Stalinism, so dialectical logic can only be known through its opposite—formal logic—which it incorporated and surpassed.

For our purposes we need only examine the three basic laws of formal logic:

(1) The law of identity: a thing is a thing, or, algebraically, ' $A = A$ '.

(2) The law of contradiction: ' A ' is not non-' A '.

(3) The law of the excluded middle: a thing is either ' A ' or non-' A '. It can't be something in-between.

With the law of identity as a starting point, the other laws follow 'logically'. If ' A ' is equal to itself, then it cannot be equal to something other than itself. This 'something else' is categorised as non-' A '. Once the law of contradiction is accepted, it follows that these two things ' A ' and non-' A ', are mutually exclusive.

These laws are ideas, consciously formed conceptions about the nature of objective reality. Marxists contend that the ideas in men's minds are, in the last analysis, determined, not arbitrarily, but by the objective natural and social conditions of their lives. The ideas of formal logic did not drop out of the sky; they were not innate in Aristotle's mind. Every day people employ the laws of formal logic quite unconsciously: the child at the zoo feels safe watching the lion in its cage since he knows the lion is inside the cage and therefore it cannot be outside it. The child is applying the law of contradiction. It only takes one look in your wallet to decide whether you can afford to buy a new £10 coat — either you have the £10 or you do not: the law of the excluded middle. Formal logic is continually used in this manner by people who have never read a word of Aristotle.

What, then, are the material roots of these laws? The law of identity reflects the objective fact that things maintain certain features which allow them to be differentiated from other things even through all the various metamorphoses which they may undergo. Whether a student studies art, economics or biology; whether he is in his first year at college or doing research, he can still be categorised as a student due to his permanent basic characteristic of being in a full-time educational institution to pursue knowledge. A tree goes through many processes before ending up in someone's home as a table, but we can still recognise one material — wood — through all its various changes of form. Whatever form a workers' state may at various times assume we must recognise that it maintains one basic characteristic, a socialised economic base, which enables us to differentiate it from a capitalist state. Thus, the law of identity was not concocted out of nothing but was a conscious expression of man's experience of the world around him. A student is a student; wood is wood; a workers' state is a workers' state; 'A' equals 'A'.

This recognition of certain permanent characteristics of things amidst all their changes and different forms, is an essential part of man's cognition of the

world around him, for it allows him to classify things — to place them in one category as distinct from other groups of things which belong to different categories; this is an indispensable feature of coherent thinking.

The other two laws which follow from the law of identity also reflect definite features of reality. The law of contradiction expresses the fact that things cannot belong to two different and opposing categories. If the Soviet Union is a workers' state then it cannot be a capitalist state. Similarly with the law of the excluded middle. Either you are a student or you are something other than a student. There is no in-between category.

Limitations Of Formal Logic

Since these laws of formal logic are rooted in objective reality, they are essential tools for us in our efforts to understand that reality. But, though necessary they are not sufficient. Critical examination of formal logic will bring to light its defects and limitations.

The apparently innocuous formula, 'A' = 'A'; Trotsky in the following passage:-

"If we observe these two letters under a lens, they are quite different from each other. But, one can object, the question is not of the size or the form of the letters, since they are only symbols for equal quantities, for instance, a pound of sugar. The objection is beside the point; in reality a pound of sugar is never equal to a pound of sugar — a more delicate scale always discloses a difference. Again one can object: but a pound of sugar is always equal to itself. Neither is this true — all bodies change uninterruptedly in size, weight, colour etc. They are never equal to themselves. A sophist will respond that a pound of sugar is equal to itself 'at any given moment'.

"Aside from the extremely dubious practical value of this 'axiom', it does not withstand theoretical criticism either. How should we really conceive the word 'moment'? If it is an infinite See ERRATUM at end of article.)

the axiom ' A ' is equal to ' A ' signifies that a thing is equal to itself if it does not change, that is if it does not exist." ('In Defense of Marxism')

Trotsky here is showing that the formula ' A ' equals ' A ' is only an approximation to reality. The approximation is sufficient for elementary tasks when the degree of error is negligible. For example, it does not matter to either the customer or the seller that a pound of sugar is not exactly a pound of sugar but slightly more or less - within certain limits. The engineer knows that the one inch diameter shaft he produces does not have to be exactly one inch but may be slightly over or under one inch - within certain limits.

These "certain limits" that we experience in our everyday activities is the particular feature of reality which limits the value of formal logic. The extent to which a 'tolerance' is attached to the classification of material phenomena is the extent to which we can 'tolerate' the use of formal logic in our understanding of these phenomena.

Dialectical logic

Formal logic treats things as unalterable and static. It does not take into account change - an undeniable feature of the universe - and consequently is at a loss when things deviate from their identity, beyond certain limits. The law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle would only be completely true if there were impassable barriers between things, if everything was atomised and in isolation from everything else. Reality, however is very different. The numerous contradictory features of the universe, its constant state of flux and the complex relations between things demand a higher mode of thought and investigation than formal logic can provide if the essence of objective reality is to be grasped.

The dialectical method is the mode of thought which corresponds to the many complexities of man's social and natural environment. It therefore cannot be totally presented in the form of so many fixed and eternal formulae but must have the dynamic features of reality itself.

Dialectics does not reject completely the apparatus of formal logic but it does subordinate it to the role of carrying out relatively elementary tasks - defining things and classifying them, etc. The starting point of dialectical logic is the concept of the thought process in the mind and objective material processes interacting with each other to constitute a comprehensive unity. The marxist revolution in dialectics was precisely in defining the nature of this unity in terms of the "basic question...of the relation of thinking and being." Marx's materialism demonstrated that consciousness and the process of thinking were organically linked to reality.

Thus practice - the application of conceptual knowledge to material reality - is the criterion of the truth of man's ideas. The ideas of the scientist about nature are tested when those ideas are put into practice and the results observed. The results of the experiment will demonstrate to what extent the theory actually reflects reality and the aspects which need further investigation - investigation which will develop knowledge to a higher level. A revolutionary party develops a theory of the nature of capitalism and its specific features in its own country by engaging in struggle and experiencing, through its failures and successes, the defining characteristics of the capitalist power-structure. Consequently as the party learns more about the nature of the economic and social order it is working to overthrow and its effect on the consciousness of the masses, it can work out the correct strategy and tactics to fulfill its task. Hence, the concept of the unity of theory and practice. Theory and practice constitute a unity of opposites

The concept of the unity and conflict of opposites is one of the fundamental laws of dialectics and corresponds to the reality of this unity in the material world. The dialectical materialist world outlook treats all phenomena as processes and sees them in their origin, development and withering away. It is the struggle of internal contradictory forces in things which is the dynamic of their development. Very much interrelated with this concept is another basic law of dialectics - the transformation of quantitative changes

into qualitative change. Again this idea of changes in the size of some aspect of a thing leading to a change of the thing itself into something of a different kind, expresses a universal trait of reality.

The classic example of these laws of dialectical development is the changing of a liquid into a gas through the application of heat. The molecules of the liquid, like all matter, are attracted to each other by gravitational forces. On the other hand the heat contained in a body tends to expand it, to force the molecules away from each other. With the application of more and more heat the tension between the contradictory forces of the molecules to be attracted to each other on the one hand and to expand on the other will become greater, but the liquid will remain a liquid throughout the process - until a certain point. This "certain point" is the boiling point of the liquid - the point at which the quantitative change in the heat contained in the substance results in a rapid and sudden qualitative change from liquid to gas.

Similarly, the aspirations of students to enquire freely into the nature of society and the world in general and to have some control over their education and university administration comes into conflict with the actual reality of an educational system which is designed to meet the needs of capitalism, bureaucratically run universities and courses which are compartmentalized and, in the case of the social sciences, mere apologies for capitalism which are quite out of touch with reality. This contradiction has become extremely acute since the war due to the enormous and rapid increase in the number of students necessitated by the increasing technological needs of capitalism. This vast increase in the number of students has given them a quite significant role in modern capitalism but, for the same reasons, has made them a potentially revolutionary force in the struggle against the system which created them. This is the root of the world-wide student revolt.

Such are the contradictory features of the growth of the student population. Again the quantitative change in this section of society has led to its qualitative transformation from a relatively indifferent, sometimes reactionary, political force to a revolutionary one with an important role to play in the broad revolutionary movement.

Historical materialism, the Marxist conception of social development, is the dialectic applied to society. The most fundamental contradiction of class divided society to which all other contradictions are reducible is the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. This contradiction is the dynamic of social change. Marx gave a clear exposition of this conception of social development in his preface to "The Critique of Political Economy":-

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness... At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production... From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution."

Thus the basis of social development as with all development is internal contradictions - the conflict of opposites. The concept of the unity of opposites reflects the fact that the opposing forces in a thing are not arbitrary but are dependent on each other. As Hegel put it:- "In opposition the difference is not confronted by any other but its other." Hence there could be no right without a left, no negative without a positive. Capitalist production relations come into conflict with the development of the productive force, yet it was precisely these productive forces

which gave birth to capitalist productive relations; students revolt against capitalism, yet it was the needs of capitalism which created the potentially revolutionary student population.

The law of the negation of the negation expresses the characteristic of development which is manifested in the evolution of things into their opposites. Once again we find in Capital, Marx using the dialectical method in his analysis of society:-

"The capitalist mode of production and appropriation, and hence capitalist private property, is the first negation of individual private property founded on the labours of the proprietor. But capitalist production bogots with the inexorability of a law of nature, its own negation. It is the negation of the negation."

In nature too, we see that the blossom is negated by the bud which in turn is negated by the fruit. It is the negation of the negation.

These general laws of motion pervade reality, and their conceptual translation in the mind of man constitutes the system of dialectical logic. From the consciousness of the general nature of reality flows a precise mode of investigation into specific phenomena - a dialectical methodology.

The dialectician proceeds to study a thing by first isolating it from all the things with which it has relationships and connections. The contradictory tendencies within the thing must be sought for so that it can be seen as a unity of opposites, the key to its inner development. But nothing can be fully understood so long as it remains dragged from its environment and sees its various contradictory features in their relationships with the rest of the world-process. The things must also be examined in relation to the various processes it itself experiences. We must look for the interaction of quantity and quality, the negation of the negation etc. The studying of parts of reality in isolation, seek-

ing their internal contradictions and developments and different sides and then synthesising the acquired knowledge into a greater and deeper knowledge with practice as the criterion of the validity of continually developing conceptions of reality is the method which will deepen the understanding of nature and society from the appearance of things to their essence. It is the method of the dialectical materialist.

The Dialectic of the Dialectic

The superiority of dialectics over formal logic lies not only in the ability of the former's ability to give a more accurate description of the real world but also in the ability to explain its own development. We have seen how Hegel's revolution in logic 'negated' formalism and founded dialectics as a new system of thought corresponding to a higher stage of man's development. The dialectic was the negation of formal logic.

But when Marx stripped Hegel's dialectic of its mysticism and idealism and "placed it on its feet again" it became materialist dialectics. In Marx's words:-

"My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but its direct opposite." Thus Hegel's system itself was 'negated'. It is the negation of the negation. The development of the dialectic bears witness to its own accuracy as an expression of reality. "Thereby the dialectic of the concept itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world". (Marx)

Dialectics and the Proletarian Revolution

During 1939-1940 there was a factional struggle in the American section of the 4th International between the proletarian wing of the party, led by Trotsky, and the petty-bourgeois opposition in the form of Burnham and Shachtman. The central question was the nature of the Soviet Union. As the debate developed it gradually became a discussion on the role of dialectics in the working class movement and it became increasingly clear that the petty-bourgeois wing of the party, who denied that the Soviet Union was any longer a workers state

had succumbed to impressionism precisely because of their rejection of dialectical materialism. By observing only the superstructural degeneration of the Soviet Union and remaining blind to its socialised economic base they made the fundamental error of failing to differentiate the appearance of the Soviet state from its essence. Their rejection of dialectics led to their ultimate abandonment of revolutionary politics and flight to the camp of the bourgeoisie.

The lessons of history are clear. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of dialectical thinking for revolutionary socialists. A correct mode of thought is indispensable to a correct analysis of the nature of capitalism and the concrete situations which confront revolutionaries in the struggle for its overthrow. Correct political policies are a consequence of a correct method of analysis of events, the ability to understand the nature of particular struggles and their inner developments.

As Lenin pointed out:- "There can be no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory." It is the duty of revolutionary socialists to study and deepen their understanding of materialist dialectics, to apply it in struggles and integrate theory and practice. Only dialectical materialists can see the transient nature of capitalism; its origin development and withering away. The adherence of revolutionaries to the logic of Marxism is a decisive factor in that "withering away".

Erratum

@@ tesimal interval of time, then a pound of sugar is subjected during the course of that moment to inevitable changes. Or is the 'moment' a purely mathematical abstraction, that is, a zero of time? But everything exists in time; time is consequently a fundamental element of existance. Thus...

VIETNAM

THE WAR CONTINUES

CONTINUE THE DEMOS

NOVEMBER 23 NOVEMBER 23 NOVEMBER 23 NOV

On October 15 an estimated 30 million Americans took part in an unprecedented demonstration demanding that the U.S. government withdraw its troops from Vietnam. The October 20 issue of Intercontinental Press stated: "A virtual explosion of anti-war sentiment has dealt a heavy blow to Nixon's plan to continue American Aggression in Vietnam. The October 15 Moratorium against the war in Vietnam has served to catalyze popular opposition to the war in the most massive overt form seen yet."

In London about 300 U.S. students demonstrated at the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square along with organisers of the British antiwar movement...

JOIN THE RISING INTERNATIONAL ANTIWAR MOVEMENT NOVEMBER 23

On November 23 the Vietnam Mobilisation Committee, a united front of anti Vietnam war organisations and groups, is holding a mass demo against the war in solidarity with the Vietnamese and the U.S. student strike and March on Washington November 14 and 15.

HELP ORGANISE THE DEMO - BE THERE -
ASSEMBLE SUN. NOV. 23 HYDE PARK 1:30

C
VMY headquarters is at Room 1, 13
Whites Row, London E.1.
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POSTERS - RAISE MONEY

All U.S. troops out of Vietnam NOW!
End British Support for the U.S. War!
Recognise the Provisional Revolutionary
Government of South Vietnam!
Victory to the NLF. NOV. 23 NOV. 23 NOV.

One of the more astounding peculiarities of the British Left is the absence of a viable revolutionary youth movement. There does exist a stratum of revolutionary youth, but this only finds partial organizational expression in a welter of different small youth organizations. This is largely due to the fact that the youth upsurge is still in its early stages in Britain. The struggle must deepen before we can apply the same norms to Britain that would apply to France or the U.S.A. A further factor of crucial importance in understanding the present is the history of left youth movements in Britain.

The first national left youth movement emerged after the first world war. Small groups of young people were formed spontaneously up and down the country. Eventually loose federations amongst these groups coagulated. One of the most active centres was Clapham, where the "Youth Labour League" was formed. This League asked Arthur Henderson for the Labour Party's help in founding a national organization. Arthur Peacock, a Youth Labour League member, wrote: "he (Henderson) did not seem very sympathetic. He listened attentively, told me as party secretary, he did not encourage outside organizations but wanted all the various activities to be within the party machine, and promised to bring the matter to the attention of the National executive."

In 1923 a labour party subcommittee reported Young peoples sections were to be set up for those between the ages of 14 and 21. The sections were to work within the party and not to have any national organisation of their own, and should mainly be recreational and not too much attention paid to politics. However, in relations to election work, there was to be full advantage taken of the young peoples' energy and desire to serve." The national youth League felt the proposals to be far too cautious and arranged to meet Herbert Morrison to put their case. Morrison explained that the National executive Committee would not sanction support for an outside body. "He did not understand why we were so angry. The Executive thought we would welcome the scheme... We suggested there should be a national conference, a national committee, a youth secretary. Again Mr. Morrison said 'no' and 'no' very

emphatically."

Competition from the YCL and the larger ILP Guild of youth forced the labor Party to set up a Labour League of youth with a national organisation and a national conference. As the league grew it moved to the left, and by 1936 the left wing "Advance" group controlled the National Advisory Committee. The league conference that elected them also passed resolutions in favour of self-government for the league. The Labour Party responded by disbanding the national Advisory Committee and abandoning the 1937 conference. The NAC refused to be disbanded. It organised a fight against the NEC memorandum on youth within the Labour Party and carried the league forward as an independent movement, although with considerable support from local constituency parties. An "unofficial" national conference was held in early 1937 and it was found that the league was still growing. The paper "Advance" warned, however, that "New People are not attracted to an organisation whose chief concern was to fight the memorandum." The NAC under the influence of the Communist Party, decided to compromise with the Labour Party. A truce was arranged, with the LP having the right to appoint a majority of the NAC and of the editorial board of the League Paper "Advance". At this stage the league had a paper membership of 150,000 and was selling some 25,000 copies of "Advance" a month. The truce was ended when the National Executive Committee of March 1939 expelled the leaders of the Socialist League and, as an afterthought suspended the NAC and cancelled the conference of the League of Youth.

After the second World war, the Labour Party reformed the League of Youth. The History of the League was a repeat of that of its predecessor, except that it was on a far smaller scale. A cycle was established in which the organisation grew, demanded self government, moved to the left and then was destroyed by Transport House after a debilitating faction fight. This time a National Status movement was set up to fight for a national conference of the League and for the right to elect an executive committee responsible to this conference. By 1952, John Lawrence wrote in Socialist Outlook,

"they (LP) regard them (the Leaguers) as a threat rather than an asset.

Consequently they have limited and restricted all the efforts of the League to work out its own contribution to the mass fight against capitalism. With this result—some members have fallen away disgusted, few recruits can be made and those who remain have become "ultra-revolutionary", cheering every attack on the leaders, desperately demanding "socialist" solutions, although, I suspect, with little confidence in getting them. In this kind of atmosphere it is not surprising that a somewhat exotic brand of "pure socialism" has developed in which the construction of "Socialist" programmes tends to take the place of a mass campaign against Toryism." In 1955, the Labour Party axed an already dying organisation. The Young Socialists repeated the cycle of growth and then repression. The Transport House bureaucrats have never been happy with any form of national youth organisation and were not content until they had launched a series of witch-hunts against the left and gilded the Young Socialists constitutionally until it became that pale ghost --the LPYS. The most surprising aspect of the present situation is that the void left has not been filled by the YCL which seems unable to grow under the most favourable conditions.

Is it possible to analyse the characteristics of the sponsored left youth movements? The history of British left youth movements has severely discredited this type of organisation. The first thing to note is that they are, paradoxically enough, in the long term stable. The adult sponsor has the material resources to support the youth organisation and to keep it alive over difficult periods or to restart it in case of extinction. The sponsoring organisation also keeps its youth movement under very severe check. Dispute over control of the organisation becomes a source of major tension with the sponsor and sponsored snarling across the chasm of the generation gap. The CP has dealt with this by a continuing series of mini-purges that is sufficient to keep the moderately sized YCL in line. The LP has favoured a swift execution of the sponsored body at times of crisis.

If the sponsored youth organisations seem to have no future, what are the prospects for independent youth organisations? The record is scarcely more impressive. Organisations like YCND have only achieved a very short life. The political and

organisational crises that are wracking the SDS of both Germany and USA are now well known. The short "life" of students, the volatility of this milieu and the structural discontinuity of university life all militate against the formation of stable organisations. But the problem is more acute. The radicalisation of youth, together with the relative impermeability of the traditional labour movement to revolutionary ideas, has forced the independent youth movements to function as if they were embryonic revolutionary parties. But they are decisively unfitted to carry through this role or to develop the necessary political theory to enable them to make the transition to such formations. The necessary political programme and the consequent organisational form required to implement this programme can only be formed over a period of time by the evolution and testing of concepts over the whole sphere of political life. The inevitable failure of the two SDS in this respect leads to impressionism and the rationalization of political and organizational weakness thro' spontaneous theories. In this country, RSSF has still not decisively got off the ground. The real base that it seemed to be building at the time of the LSE struggles has been eroded by inter-Maoist factionalism and the lack of a serious programme for action. It would be, to say the least premature to write the epitaph of RSSF; it is still the most hopeful thing that has emerged from the youth radicalisation in Britain. But it would be perfectly correct to raise a question mark over the continued useful existence of RSSF in its present form.

How real is the dichotomy between independent and sponsored youth movements? The differences that are so sharp superficially grow less distinct on further investigation. The whole matrix of organisational difficulties that arise between a sponsored youth movement and the adult organisation are, in fact, merely reflections of the political divergences between the left-wing youth and the Social Democrat or Stalinist apparatus on their rights. Theyouth would not be forced to fight so fiercely for autonomy nor the sponsoring group be so unwilling to concede any real measure of self government, if there were not grave political differences between them.

The independent youth groups have, as mentioned above, inbuilt structural weaknesses which continually retard their organisational and political maturation. The weakness of the sponsored youth group relates to the nature of the sponsoring body. If the adult group possesses non-sectarian, revolutionary politics and a certain level of organisational strength, it can give the youth group its advice and experience; factors that are crucial due to the immaturity and transitory nature that are inherent in youth groups. This is one of the reasons behind the success of the JCR in France. The failure of the LP, CP and SLL youth formations lies not in the sponsored relationship but in the political weaknesses of the adult groups. A revolutionary, non-sectarian group can afford, because of its political strength, to grant autonomy to the youth movement. As the youth radicalisation in Britain deepens and as organised Marxism gains in strength, it will be found that sponsorship could become the real independence; free of those organisational and political fetters that are the mark of the "independent" youth movement.

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TROTSKYISM TODAY.

(This is a transcript of a speech given by Ernest Mandel in a debate between the IMG and the British Communist Party whose spokesman was Monty Johnstone, held in the Conway Hall, London, on Nov. 7.)

Dear Comrades, the very fact that Monty Johnstone is here this evening debating with me on the problem of Trotskyism today, should already be considered a proof of what Trotskyism is NOT. I am not going to deny the intelligence of anybody here present by saying that it is not counter-revolutionary or an agency of Fascism, or agency of Imperialism or any of this nonsense because if it would be, not only this debate would not take place, but many other things which have been happening in the world in the last few years would have been absolutely ununderstandable. But what Trotskyism is not, is a defeated tendency in the international working class movement. What it is not, is a Menshevik Why have the Soviet bureaucrats after

type revision of Marxism which has been crushed definitely as was said in the Soviet Union at the Party Congress in 1927, as was repeated in a party Congress in the early '30s; as was repeated by the unfortunate Nikita Kruschev at the 20th Party Congress of the CP of the Soviet Union; as is being repeated again and again and again in innumerable publications under the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Because, if it would really have been a crushed, defeated, unexisting, eliminated, Menshevik tendency, why in the hell would anybody want to discuss with us? Why does Monty Johnstone sit here discussing and debating it?

having crushed, and destroyed and eliminated and vanquished and triumphed over this tendency 40, 30, 20 and ten years ago why are these bureaucrats forced again and again and again to write books, to write pamphlets, to write articles to come back to this problem? Why have there been 3 or 4 NEW books published on Trotskyism inside the Soviet Union in the last 12 months if there would have been a definitely defeated, crushed tendency?

So, I think the first point to be made this evening, a point which is a historical justice which we have to pay today to the founder of the Red Army to the ^{leader of the} Insurrection of the October Revolution which initiated the first victorious working class revolution in a large country, is, that on this 90th anniversary of the birth of Leon Trotsky, which coincides with the anniversary of the October Revolution, the movement which he created, the ideas which he stood for the ideas which he defended live stronger than ever in the world. There are living youth movements to-day, there are thousands of young people coming today to Trotskyism over the world, all over, and that is the only reason why Monty Johnstone has to debate with us about Trotskyism today; this is the only reason why the stalinist bureaucrats, the Soviet bureaucracy has to write an uninterrupted number of speeches, pamphlets, magazine articles and books on the subject of Trotskyism.

Trotskyism today is a young movement; it is a movement of youth; it is a movement being built and rebuilt by young people coming to it on the Five Continents. And for that very same reason, I am not going to dwell at all on that question which probably Monty Johnstone will dwell on quite a lot - what Trotsky wrote, what he did not write in 1905, or in 1912, or in 1917, or in 1919 - because I say from the beginning that this is completely irrelevant.

Does anybody really think that you have today in France 250,000 people voting for a Trotskyist candidate; does anybody think that you have today in Ceylon a Trotskyist Trade Union leader

leading tens of thousands of workers in big strikes; does anybody think that you have today in Japan tens of thousands of people demonstrating behind banners of Trotsky BECAUSE Trotsky wrote this or that in 1905, in 1907 or 1912? The overwhelming majority of these people have not read that, are not interested in reading that -- it's a mistake on their part of course, because everybody should be interested and informed about the history of the revolutionary movement. But it is irrelevant to the main problem which we have to understand and to explain this evening - what is the origin, what is the root of the strength of world Trotskyism today, why do thousands and thousands of people flock to that movement on a world scale, and why do the Soviet bureaucrats and Monty Johnstone have to reopen a debate which they thought, which they hoped to have closed with machine gun bullets 30 or 35 years ago.

Now I will give you Four reasons, four basic reasons - historical reasons - why the Trotskyist movement is today stronger than it ever was before, why thousands of people are flocking to it everywhere in the world, why it has a bigger geographical, numerical and political influence and extension in the world than it ever had before, even at the time when it was still an influential tendency inside Communist Parties and inside the Communist International.

The first reason has to do with a basic problem of the colonial revolution, with a basic problem of the revolution in the under-developed colonial and semi-colonial countries. Stalinist parties, parties which call themselves Communist Parties, today, in all these countries continue to follow an essentially Menshevik or semi-Menshevik policy. They believe, as believed the Mensheviks in Russia, that because their countries are backward, because the indigenous Bourgeoisie is not yet in political power in these countries, the immediate strategic task for the revolutionary

working class and poor peasantries in these countries is somehow to establish an alliance with the national bourgeoisie against Imperialism and feudal and semi-feudal forces, and somehow to arrive at a Coalition form of government, a Government of the 4 Classes as it was called in one case, of the National Front in other cases, to establish a regime of the National Democracy as it is called in the new official party programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Experience confirms what Trotsky's Theory of the Permanent Revolution, proclaimed in 1906, that there is no way out for any underdeveloped colonial or semi-colonial country on this road. That any struggle which limits itself to a fight against rural feudal or semi-feudal landlords or against foreign Imperialism, while keeping in power the National Bourgeoisie, while maintaining capitalist property relations, while not establishing the Dictatorship of the Proletariat allied to the poor peasantry will inevitably lead these underdeveloped countries backward, stagnating, exploited and super-exploited by national and international capital, will not be able to tear away the millions and millions of these countries out of their secular misery.

Experience has not only confirmed that; it has confirmed a much more terrible lesson, a much more terrible lesson that thousands and thousands of Communists in Brazil, in Iraq, 500,000 communists in Indonesia had to pay for with their lives: that any illusions of establishing durable relationships of coalition and collaboration with bourgeois and semi-bourgeois political forces in these countries can only lead to crushing defeat for the working class and poor peasantries, to crushing defeat for the revolutionary movement.

Trotskyism lives, Trotskyism grows and wins new people, new members, new tendencies and new parties in underdeveloped colonial and semi-colonial countries

because it stands for this basic rule of revolution in these countries There is NO WAY OUT for these countries but the way of the Permanent Revolution. There is no way of establishing real national liberation and real independance from Imperialism if you don't overthrow ALSO the bourgeois class together with the foreign agents, the agents of foreign Imperialism and the feudal and semi-feudal land-lords. There is no possibility of liberation of peoples, peasants and workers in under-developed countries unless you establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat allied to the poor peasantry, if you don't establish a workers' state. Only in those countries where this has happened- China, Cuba, North Vietnam and it is happening now in South Vietnam,- is there a way out for these countries.

Everywhere under the responsibility of the Communist Parties following the Moscow line, following Stalinist Menshevism, this has been prevented from happening. There have been uncounted defeats, miseries, tears and blood for the workers and the people of these countries. THIS REALITY OF TODAY, and not quotations of 1907, 1917 or 1921, had to be answered by anyone who wants to understand what is going on in these countries of the world.

And for the Trotskyist movement, for revolutionary Marxists in the world, it was a moment of great victory and great triumph, when the ideas of the Permanent Revolution, when the proclamation that the only form of victorious revolution POSSIBLE today in a backward country is a Socialist Revolution were taken over by the Cuban Revolutionists, were proclaimed in the Second Declaration of Havana, and when the first victorious revolution in the Western Hemisphere confirmed that Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International had been 100% correct in their basic strategic line in under-developed countries.

The Second reason for the existence of the world Trotskyist movement today, the second reason for the

growth of Trotskyism on a world scale, is that we stand completely and uncompromisingly on the revolutionary road to Socialism in the industrial Imperialist countries, as against the reformist, electoralist road to socialism defended by the Communist Parties today in N.America, in Europe, in Japan, in Australia and in New Zealand. When we say we stand for the revolutionary road this does not mean that we are partisans of putchism or adventurism, that we think that small minorities- a few hundred people here, a few hundred people there- could catch power unexpectedly and without anybody taking notice in strong industrialised advanced countries where the Bourgeoisie represents tremendous power of political experience, of political tradition, of political continuity and where its rule over these countries does not depend only and essentially on its weapons of repression, on its weapons army and its police, but above all by the ideological, moral and political influence which it still wields over a large part of the petite-bourgeoisie, of the middle classes and even among an insignificant part of the working class itself. But what this stand, this absolutely clear and uncompromising stand, in favour of the revolutionary road to Socialism MEANS, this is essentially the three following points:-

a) A deep conviction that objective situations, independant of the will, of the wish of any group or party of people, objective conditions create periodically pre-revolutionary situations in these industrially advanced countries; that these objective situations create unavoidably at these moments of revolutionary upsurge of the masses, large scale actions by the working class- general strikes, occupations of factories- which go obviously beyond the limit of struggles for immediate wage demands. That the duty of revolutionary parties groups and vanguards is essentially to

prepare itself and to prepare the vanguard of the working class to intervene during these minutes, during these hours, during these days and these weeks. Because it is only in these upsurges, periodical, cyclical upsurges of the mass movement, that you can overthrow Capitalism. You cannot overthrow capitalism gradually; you cannot destroy the bourgeois army battalion by battalion; you cannot destroy the power of the capitalist class piecemeal; you can only do it by revolutionary action, and revolutionary action is not possible every day, revolutionary action is not possible under conditions of 'Business as usual'; it is only made possible in those pre-revolutionary situations when you have the highest tension of class relations and class struggle. But the party must be prepared, a vanguard must be prepared, a class must be prepared to intervene in a decisive way at these moments in order to break through towards the conquest of power, towards the victory of a socialist revolution.

Secondly, (b) we think that the propagation and action for transitional demands, essentially the demand for workers' control of production (which summarizes all the transitional demands of the working class in the industrially advanced countries), that propaganda, agitation and action for these transitional demands in a permanent way is absolutely unavoidable if you want to create a situation where the working class knows what to do next when conditions are favourable for a revolution. To think that the working class, which has been educated day after day, week after week, year after year in nothing but immediate trade union demands and electoral policy, that such a working class will, in some magical way, suddenly be capable of revolutionary consciousness in a revolutionary situation is a belief in magic, belief in mysticism. We think that the duty of a revolutionary party- and this Trotsky did not say, but Lenin said, and this is the A B C of revolutionary politics- we think that the duty of

a revolutionary party is to make revolutionary propaganda also when the situation is not revolutionary. Lenin said that is the basic difference between a revolutionary party and a reformist or a Centrist party. When revolution goes on, of course many people discover their revolutionary soul.

And in the third place, we believe, as I said before, that this struggle for transitional demands, this struggle for demands which cannot be assimilated by the bourgeois system in a normally functioning way, that this struggle should not only be conducted in non-revolutionary periods on the basis of propaganda, but that every opportunity should be seized to promote working class action on these demands. They should be injected by all possible means into the living, day-to-day class struggle: it is only through the experience of the workers with this type of demand in several fragmented limited struggles that they will achieve, at a higher stage of revolutionary development, the ability to start a general struggle for these demands. Otherwise, they will appear as something injected from outside, falling from the sky, or dependant only on some small minority groups at moments of revolutionary tension.

Now if we look at the attitudes of the Communist Parties in the West, of the French C.P. in '68, of the Italian C.P. today, in fact of any C.P. in any Imperialist country, we can see they have completely abandoned this task: they do nothing in the field of revolutionary propaganda, nothing to inject inside the working class movement other elements of struggle than the classical reformist activities of trade unions and electoralism. When they are faced with a pre-revolutionary situation as in France in 1968, and as in Italy now, they shy away from their duties by the same type of reformist sophistry which Lenin so violently opposed in his struggle against Social Democracy. I will just ask Monty Johnstone

what he thinks about this excellent quote from Lenin applicable to the French May revolution in 1968, and the attitude of the C.P. in France in May '68:-

"There can be no talk in this connection about illusions or their reputation, about the possibility of transferring a revolutionary situation into a revolutionary victory, since NO socialist has ever guaranteed that today's revolutionary situation and not tomorrow's will produce a revolution (he is talking of a victory). What we are discussing is the indisputable and fundamental duty of all socialists- that of revealing to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, explaining its scope and depth, arousing the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness and determination, helping it to go over to revolutionary action and forming for that purpose organisations suited to the revolutionary situation."

It is sufficient to compare that quote with what the C.P. in France, Italy and in all capitalist advanced countries has been doing since 20-25 years if not longer in order to understand why these parties have become fundamentally Reformist parties, and to understand why thousands of young people flock to Trotskyism in these countries.

Third reason for the existence of the world Trotskyist movement today :- Workers' Democracy, democratically centralised workers' self-management in opposition to bureaucratic monopoly of power and material privileges in the countries that have already overthrown capitalism; that is the main historical goal that still has to be achieved in these countries. These countries are ruled by a privileged bureaucracy which is the object of hatred of thousands and thousands of youth, advanced intellectuals and advanced workers in these countries, as you could see graphically during the few months in Czechoslovakia when workers, students and youth had the possibility to express at least partially

what they really thought.

And the same bureaucratic group is today one/^{of} the main stumbling blocks, one of the main reasons of discredit of Socialism and Communism in the Western advanced countries; one of the main reasons why you do not have a much greater number of workers, a much greater number of revolutionary students and intellectuals who come out Four Square and openly for a socialist revolution and communism. There can be no question of the possibility of establishing a full-fledged socialist society; that is to say a society without any social differentiation, with withering away of the state, of commodity production, of money relations in any of the E. European countries. That's not what is involved in the debate. But what is possible is a change which I call a political revolution in these countries and a change which re-establishes or establishes for the first time on a whole series of fields the elementary realisation of what has been the Marxist and Leninist programme on the question of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the beginning of the building of a Socialist society.

You will not find in any of the works of Marx or Lenin one sentence which says that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat means the existance only of one party. You will not find in any of the writings of Marxism this dispicable idea. Dictatorship of the Proletariat means installation of censorship, and not of censorship against non-existing bourgeois capitalist or landlord forces but censorship against the working class. The crime which the Soviet bureaucracy committed last year by its invasion of the Czechoslovak socialist Republic is essentially this- THAT THEY RE-IDENTIFIED IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS SOCIALISM WITH CENSORSHIP AGAINST THE WORKERS.

Because that's what they have done. They have suppressed that little

right which the Czech workers conquered between January and August of lat year- to vote a few resolutions, to have them published in their T.U. papers; to have the right to criticise the government of their country if they don't agree; to criticise the managers of their factories if they don't agree. That was a very small right which has nothing to do with full fledged Socialist Democracy which is much more far-going. But even this small right which is elementary from a Marxist Leninist point of view, which is elementary if you read 'State and Revolution' where it is said that the workers in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat should have a thousand times more rights of self-expression and self-organisation than under bourgeois democracy. This small right was taken away and hundreds of thousands of soldiers were sent into the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic ONLY in order to take it away from them. I say this is a crime and a disgrace for socialism, nationally and internationally and one of the main reasons why we have today in many, many western countries such an up-hill fight to re-establish what Marxism, what Leninism really is, because in the eyes of the workers it is to a large extent identified with crimes of this type.

Of course, as I said before, Socialism, Socialist Democracy, is not only this elementary and self-evident right of workers to be able to express themselves freely when they are in Dictatorship, THAT IS TO SAY, WHEN THEY ARE IN POWER. Socialism means something much larger than that. It means self-management on a Democratic-Centralist basis, it means rule of the workers in the factories, not in each factory taken separately but in all the factories in the economy of the country, it means subordination of planning authorities TO the workers, it means the right of the masses of the working population to determine itself,

itself freely as it is convinced, the division of the national income between the consumption front and the accumulation front. Without that you don't have real democratic working class power, and because the Fourth International, because Trotskyism stands for that, it can only win New forces in E. Europe and the Soviet Union because the whole wave of the future goes in the direction of the Trotskyist programme of the Political revolution against the bureaucracy in these countries.

And fourth and last, what Trotskyism today really means. The Fourth pillar of the Fourth International is Internationalism. The Communist movement was founded on the principle of internationalism. The bitter fruits of 'Socialism in One Country' introduced by Stalin prominently inside the Soviet and International Communist movement in 1924, these bitter fruits the leaders and militants of the international Stalinist movement are starting to eat and taste, and they are terrible fruits: They are the fruits of seeing the two largest workers states in the world threatening to start a war against each other, without any responsibility to the Soviet or Chinese workers but because of the despicable petit-bourgeois nationalist tendency which is ruling the bureaucracy in these two countries. It is seeing the Soviet bureaucracy destroying, Yes, the right of workers to express

themselves but allowing so-called Communist writers in the Soviet Union to speak about the Yellow Danger, speak about the Chinese revolution as people who are coloured and who are a menace to civilisation and who represent new Ghengis Khans. It shows the tremendous low point under which nationalism, bureaucratic, petit-bourgeois nationalism has pushed the people who are leading these parties, that such phenomena would be possible in parties which still continue to call themselves Communist.

And the result of this you could see at the last Moscow Conference of

the Communist parties of the world. You could see that this world Stalinist movement which Stalin was so proud to have created monolithically and centrally organised, how this movement is today disintegrating; how you don't have practically two C.P.s (I'm not talking about those who are only in power thanks to the Soviet Army, but there where there is still a little bit of autonomy); not two C.P.s who think alike, who have the same line. You see them fight against each other. You see a complete internal disintegration in these parties also, with different tendencies and fractions at each other's throats. It is a paradox that Trotskyism has been accused in the past, and laughed at in the past as being a movement which creates factions and which creates splits. Look at the World Communist Movement today and show me any split of the Trotskyist movement which is comparable to that, where one can speak about 12 or 15 different tendencies which are at each others' throats in a world sense.

The youth, the revolutionary forces in the world who understand instinctively what is the need for international centralisation of revolutionary forces faced with this tremendous centralisation of counter-revolutionary Imperialism on the world scale, cannot think that this is the ideal. They cannot believe that the ideal is this type of dé-centralisation and polycentrism in which the working class and the Communist movement in each country is left alone to care for itself without thinking about the international interests of the working class. They cannot believe it because it does not correspond to reality. It does not correspond to the interests of the international working class or to the interests of Marx of Lenin, of Communism.

And that's why they feel very very powerfully, as Ernesto Che Guevara launched it in his famous appeal for two three many Vietnams, as he launched it in his final

testament, the need for a real international centralised force for revolution. And that's why the idea of the Fourth International, the idea of creating a new working class international, a new revolutionary International, which many people thought, without realism, was utopian 10 years ago, is to-day an idea which catches on Powerfully amongst thousands and thousands of people in the world.

Because you can't have a socialist revolutionary movement; you can't have an advance of revolution on a world scale as you are having now, without the need for a revolutionary International imposing itself again and again and again on the consciousness of people. The revolutionary International which we want to build, which we have only started to build, of which we are only one of the original nuclei into which many many new forces will inevitably come, such a revolutionary international will be centralised but it will not be bureaucratically centralised. History will prove

that democratic centralism, that freedom of tendency, that full freedom of discussion is not an obstacle but is the vehicle for united action against the class enemy. It is bureaucratic centralism of the Stalinist type, fake centralism which has created the destructive nationalist disintegration of the world communist movement we are witnessing today.

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These four pillars:- Permanent Revolution; the Revolutionary road to Socialism in the advanced capitalist countries; Political Revolution for socialist democracy for the overthrow of bureaucracy in Eastern Europe; and Internationalism; these are the four pillars of world Trotskyism today. They explain why world Trotskyism today is a growing force. They explain it because they represent nothing but the needs of world revolution today, nothing but the idea of socialism, of Communism, of Leninism in our epoch.

"Growth and Transformation of J.C.R." continued.

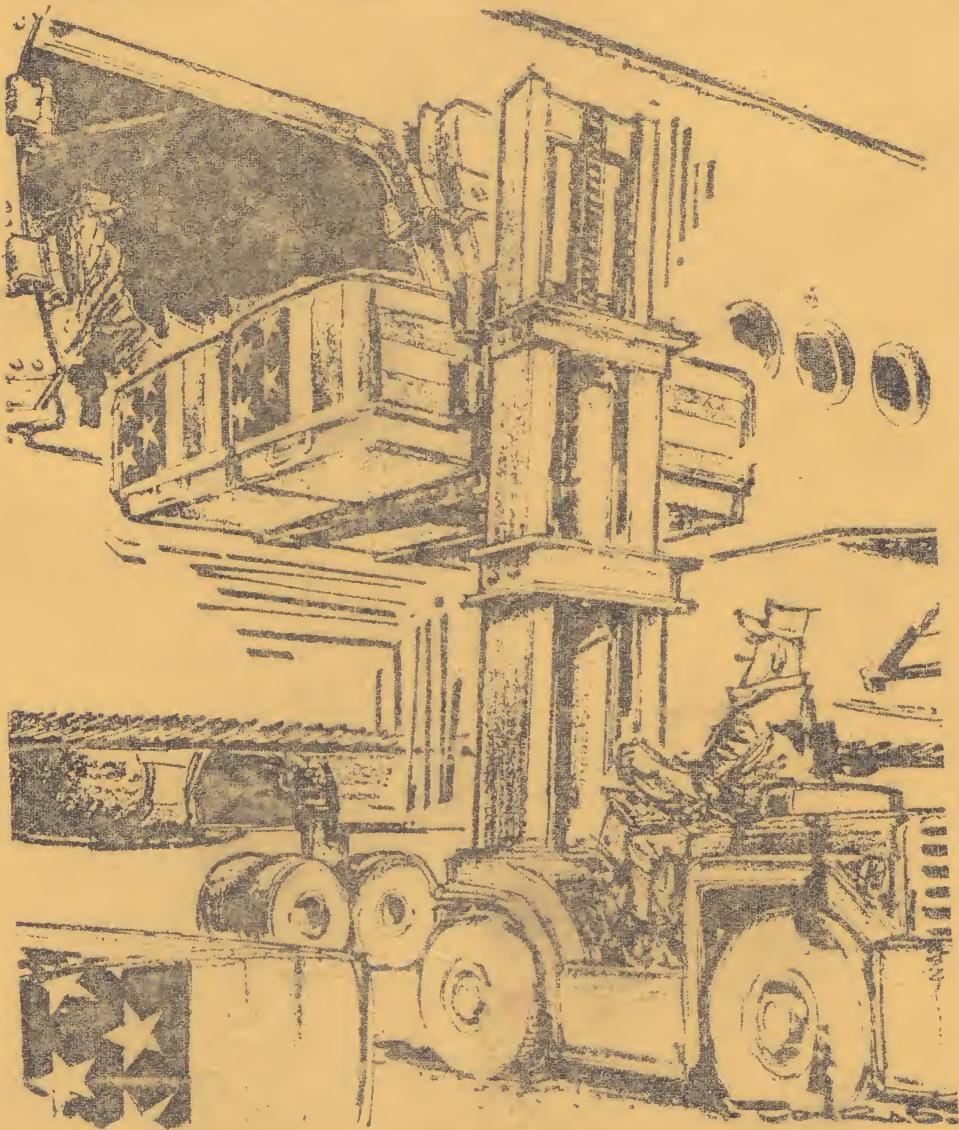
as well as the best "educated" of the new ones in the revolutionary arena formed the "circles pile", i.e. the organization in the real sense of the word, while all the others more or less defined as sympathisers, as those who act "with us" in the Action Committees in the mass movement, are "followers" as they were sometimes called, the "Rouge circles" or "circle's face", also called "open circles"

("pile" and "face" designating in French the face and the other side of a coin).

These circles took over the work in our main sectors of intervention: university, high-schools, teachers, medical workers and industrial workers.

(The articles in the paper "Rouge" can give an idea of the nature of our intervention in these different sectors.)

DON'T FORGET



U.S. troops continue to be withdrawn from South Vietnam.

NOW 23 DEMO